

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02483 310941Z

11
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 DHA-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 /035 W
----- 050386

R 310730Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 926
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGE 2483

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINR CZ
SUBJECT: TRIAL OF PLASTIC PEOPLE

REF: PRAGUE 2389

1. EMBASSY OBTAINED FROM LOCAL REUTERS CORRESPONDENT AUG. 30
FULL TEXT OF STORY RE POSTPONEMENT OF TRIAL OF ROCK MUSICIANS
ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR TODAY (REFTEL)). TEXT, EXPECTED TO REACH
WESTERN PAPERS IN TRUNCATED FORM, READS AS FOLLOWS: (BEGIN
UNCLASSIFIED)

QUOTE PRAGUE, AUG. 29, -- THE TRIAL OF 14 NON-CONFORMIST
MUSICIANS AND ARTISTS, WHICH WAS TO OPEN HERE ON MONDAY, WAS
UNEXPECTEDLY POSTPONED IN A MOVE APPARENTLY AIMED AT DISORGANIZ-
ING SUPPORT ACTIONS FOR THE ACCUSED, INFORMED SOURCES SAID HERE
TODAY.

THE SOURCES, WHO HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING FOR THE ARRESTED
ARTISTS SINCE THEY WERE ROUNDED UP BY THE POLICE LAST APRIL, SAID
THE POSTPONEMENT CAME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE AND NO OFFICIAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRAGUE 02483 310941Z

REASON HAS BEEN GIVEN.

THEY SPECULATED HOWEVER THAT THE MOVE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO FOIL VARIOUS SUPPORT ACTIONS WHICH ARE BEING ORGANIZED IN FAVOR OF THE 14 ACCUSED. SEVEN OF THEM ARE CURRENTLY HELD IN PREVENTIVE DETENTION.

IN PRAGUE TWO NEW PROTEST LETTERS WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS HERE TODAY, BOTH DEMANDING THAT THE COURT ACTION BE STOPPED ALTOGETHER, AND CRITICIZING THE MOTIVES OF THIS ACTION BY THE CZECHOSLOVAK AUTHORITIES.

THE FIRST LETTER IS A PETITION, SIGNED BY MORE THAN 60 PEOPLE OF ALL PROFESSIONS, MANY OF THEM SAID TO BE IN THEIR LATE TEENS OR EARLY TWENTIES.

IT ALSO REFERRED TO THE RELATED PLZEN (PILSEN) TRIAL IN WHICH THREE YOUNG WORKERS WERE SENTENCED TO UP TO 30 MONTHS IN JAIL LAST JULY FOR ALLOWING THREE OF THE FOURTEEN TO LECTURE AND PERFORM AT A YOUTH CLUB.

"FROM THE COURSE OF THE TRIAL IN PLZEN IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE ACCUSED ARE ALLEGEDLY SENTENCED FOR HOOLIGANISM, BUT THAT THE TRUE REASON FOR THEIR PROSECUTION LIES IN THEIR ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES," SAID THE LETTER, ADDRESSED TO THE PRAGUE TRIBUNAL IN CHARGE OF THE NOW POSTPONED CASE.

WITHOUT IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES WITH THE IDEAS EXPRESSED BY THE ACCUSED THE SIGNATORIES OF THAT PETITION STRESSED THAT THESE ARTISTS, "LIKE ANY OTHER CITIZEN HAVE THE UNDENIABLE RIGHT TO EXPRESS THEIR IMPRESSIONS OF THE WORLD AROUND THEM IN A WAY THEY REGARD AS APPROPRIATE."

"IN A COUNTRY WHICH IS SATURATED WITH TELEVISION, RADIO AND BANAL COMMERCIAL WRITING, WE CONSIDER ATTEMPTS AT A PERSONAL CREATIVE EXPRESSION TO BE PRECIOUS AND WORTH APPRECIATING, AND WE REGARD ANY KIND OF PERSECUTION OF THESE ATTEMPTS AS HARMFUL," THE LETTER WENT ON.

THE SECOND LETTER WAS SIGNED BY ANUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WERE THEMSELVES INVOLVED IN POLITICAL TRIALS IN 1971.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRAGUE 02483 310941Z

IT ATTACKED THE JUDICIAL ACTION AGAINST THE FOURTEEN AS "A FURTHER STEP IN THE STREAMLINING OF THE CULTURAL LIFE AND THE LIMITATION OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION."

"WE FEAR THAT THIS TRIAL WILL REINFORCE NARROW AND PETTY BOURGEOIS TENDENCIES AND CAN ARTIFICALLY CREATE--WITH THE HELP OF BIASED PROPAGANDA--GENERATIONAL PROBLEMS BORDERING ON

POGROM-LIKE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ANY SUPPORTER OF A NON-CONFORMIST LIFESTYLE," THE LETTER SAID.

AMONG THE SIGNATORIES WERE THE CHILDREN OF JAROSLAV SABATA, A FORMER HIGH PARTY OFFICIAL, JAILED FOR SIX YEARS IN 1971 FOR CRITICIZING THE ELECTIONS THEN BEING ORGANIZED AS "UN-DEMOCRATIC."

HIS CHILDREN, IN THEIR EARLY TWENTIES, WERE SENTENCED AS WELL IN THIS TRIAL, BUT HAVE ALREADY PURGED THEIR SENTENCES. (SIC)

ALSO SIGNED THIS LETTER PETER UHL, PETRUSKA SUSTROVA, JAROSLAV SUK AND PREMYSL VONDRA, WHO WERE SENTENCED IN 1971 FOR "TROTSKYITE ACTIVITIES."

SEVERAL PROMINENT INTELLECTUALS, INCLUDING DISSIDENT AUTHORS VACLAV HAVEL, PAVEL KOHOUT, IVAN KLIMA AND LUKVIK VACULIK HAD PROTESTED EARLIER AGAINST THE ARRESTS, MADE IN APRIL THIS YEAR.

THEY SAID THE ACCUSATIONS OF HOOLIGANISM, AND THE MAIN CHARGE THAT THE UNDERGROUND MUSICIANS ARE USING "OBSCENE" WORDS, WERE ONLY AN EXCUSE FOR JUDICIAL ACTION AGAINST NON-CONFORMIST ARTISTIC CREATION.

IN VIENNA THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ANNOUNCED THAT IT WAS SENDING AN OBSERVER TO THE PRAGUE TRIAL. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BEFORE THE NEWS OF THE POSTPONEMENT WAS KNOWN.

THE FOURTEEN PEOPLE AWAITING TRIAL ARE MAINLY MUSICIANS OF TWO ROCK GROUPS, "THE PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE" AND "DG" (A MEDICAL CODE NUMBER FOR THE MENTAL DISEASE SCHIZOPHRENIA).
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PRAGUE 02483 310941Z

AMONG THE ARRESTED ARE ALSO A FORMER EVANGELIC PRIEST, SVATOPLUK KARASEK, 33, AND A SINGER-COMPOSER AND GUITARIST KAREL SOUKUP, 25.

ALSO CURRENTLY IN PRISION IS IVAN JIROUS, 33, WHO AS THE "THEORETICIAN" OF THE PRAGUE UNDERGROUND SEEMS TO BE REGARDED AS THE MAIN ACCUSED BY THE PROSECUTION.

IT WAS FOR ALLOWING THESE THREE PEOPLE TO PERFORM IN A YOUTH CLUB THAT THE THREE WORKERS WERE SENTENCED IN THE PLZEN TRIAL. END QUOTE (END UNCLASSIFIED)

2. REUTERS CORRESPONDENT REQUETTE WOULD NOT REVEAL TO WHICH WESTERN JOURNALIST PROTEST LETTERS MADE AVAILABLE, BUT WE

BELIEVE IT WAS TO HIMSELF AS HE IS KNOWN TO HAVE HAD PERSONAL
CONTACT WITH SOURCES CLOSE TO THE ACCUSED.
BYRNE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, PRESS COMMENTS, MUSIC, TRIALS, AMENDMENTS, ARTISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PRAGUE02483
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760330-0095
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976083/aaaaabww.tel
Line Count: 172
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PRAGUE 2389
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 MAR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRIAL OF PLASTIC PEOPLE
TAGS: PINT, PINR, CZ, PLASTIC PEOPLE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006